

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8237

INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZILIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 05496

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC,SOCI,TPHY,BEXP,BBSR,ABLD,NI

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: NEW CAPITAL STATUS AFTER TWO YEARS

SUMMARY: NIGERIA HAS SELECTED A SITE FOR ITS NEW CAPITAL CITY IN THE NORTHEAST PORTION OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY IN CENTRAL NIGERIA AND IS CHOOSING A NAME FOR IT IN A CONTEST OPEN TO ALL NIGERIANS. BECAUSE OF PHYSICAL CAPACITY AND FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS, THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CITY IS BEING IMPLEMENTED FOR A POPULATION OF 150,000 AT ITS INAUGURATION IN 1986, 10 YEARS AFTER CONCEPTION OF THE PROJECT, BUT FIRST PHASE PLANNING CONTINUES TOWARD THE ORIGINAL 1986 TARGET OF 300,000 IN CASE PROGRESS AND FINANCES ARE BETTER THAN NOW FORESEEN. POPULATION IN THE YEAR 2000 IS PUT AT 1.6 MILLION WITH AN ULTIMATE LIMIT OF 3 MILLION. SHORT LISTS OF CONSULTANTS INVITED LATE LAST YEAR TO PREQUALIFY FOR SEVEN INFRASTRUCTURE AREAS MAY BE COMPLETE D IN MAY OR JUNE, WITH FINAL CHOICES FROM THE 400 CANDIDATES HOPED FOR IN JUNE OR JULY. IN AN IMPORTANT CHANGE, THE FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA) HAS DECIDED NOT TO ENGAGE A PROJECT MANAGER: IT WILL MANAGE THE PROJECT

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WITH A STAFF NOW BEING RECRUITED. THE AMERICAN MASTER PLANNERS SHOULD COMPLETE THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN ON SCHEDULE IN JULY. IN SEPTEMBER, THE CDA HOPES TO MOVE TO ITS NEW BASE CAMP AT ABUJA, JUST OUTSIDE THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS CABLE SUMMARIZES THE STATUS OF NIGERIA'S NEW CAPITAL CITY PROJECT FOR THE MANY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR INTERESTED

PARTIES. SOURCES FOR THIS REPORT WERE NOT SPEAKING FOR PUBLICATION BUT THE ABOVE SUMMARY WAS WRITTEN FOR PUBLICATION IN COMMERCE AMERICA BECAUSE OF BROAD INTEREST IN THE HISTORIC PROJECT. THIS CABLE MAY BE DISSEMINATED IN FULL TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FIRMS, AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH A VESTED INTEREST IN THE PROJECT BUT SHOULD NOT BE PROVIDED TO TRADE PUBLICATIONS FOR PUBLICATION.

2. SCOPE: WHEN THE NEW CAPITAL PROJECT WAS INITIATED IN APRIL 1976 WITH THE FORMATION OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA), ORIGINAL GUIDANCE CALLED FOR QTE INAUGURATION UNQTE OF THE CITY IN CENTRAL NIGERIA IN 1986 WITH A POPULATION OF 300,000. POPULATION WOULD BE 1.6 MILLION BY THE YEAR 2000 AND ULTIMATELY REACH 3 MILLION. SINCE 1976 THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND WASTE INVOLVED IN CRASH PROJECTS AND HAS DISCOVERED THAT ITS FINANCIAL SITUATION AND OUTLOOK ARE LESS FAVORABLE THAN THOUGHT IN 1976. BECAUSE OF PERCEIVED PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS, A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO AIM AT 1986 POPULATION OF 150,000 IN THE CITY'S FIRST PHASE. IMPLEMENTATION WILL PROCEED ON THAT SCALE BUT PLANNING WILL CONTINUE ON A BASIS OF 300,000 IN 1986 IN CASE PROGRESS IS BETTER THAN FORESEEN AND THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK BRIGHTER.

3. CONSULTANTS: AS REPORTED LAGOS 12060 OF OCT. 20, 1977.

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CDA INVITED CONSULTANT PREQUALIFICATION BY DECEMBER 5 FOR A TOTAL OF EIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE AREAS, INCLUDING OVERALL PROJECT MANAGER. OVER 400 FIRMS RESPONDED, INCLUDING AT LEAST HALF-DOZEN AMERICAN FIRMS OF WHICH EMBASSY AWARE, ALTHOUGH MORE UNDOUBTEDLY RESPONDED DIRECTLY. CDA HAS NOW DECIDED TO BE OWN PROJECT MANAGER. PREQUALIFICATIONS WERE SCREENED BY ENGLAND'S MILTON KEYNES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BUT CDA WILL DO FINAL REVIEW AND HOPES HAVE SHORT-LISTS OF AT LEAST 10 FIRMS IN EACH AREA IN MAY OR JUNE. AFTER USUAL INTERVIEWS AND PROPOSALS, CDA HOPES MAKE FINAL CHOICE IN JUNE OR JULY. IT DOES NOT, HOWEVER, GUARANTEE MEETING ABOVE TIMETABLE.

4. CDA ORGANIZATION: CDA OFFICIALS ARE CURRENTLY ABROAD RECRUITING STAFF TO HANDLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT. CDA WILL BE ORGANIZED IN FIVE DEPARTMENTS, FOR ADMINISTRATION: FINANCE, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANNING : PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE: DEVELOPMENT AND ENGINEERING SERVICES: ESTATE. AT ONE POINT IN PAST MOST DEPARTMENT HEADS WOULD HAVE BEEN FOREIGNERS BUT NIGERIANS WILL HEAD MOST DEPARTMENTS UNDER NEW PLAN ALTHOUGH FOREIGNERS EXPECTED HAVE IMPORTANT ROLES. EACH DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR WILL HAVE THREE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS EXCEPT ADMINISTRATION, WHICH WILL HAVE TWO. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NOW ALHAJI ABUBAKAR

KOKO, THIRD IN THIS JOB IN TWO YEARS, WILL HAVE SPECIAL ADVISORS AND CONSULTANT SPECIALISTS OUTSIDE DEPARTMENTS. DENIS M. BROWNE, BRITON WHO SINCE SEPTEMBER WAS ONLY EXPATRIATE ON STAFF AS DIRECTOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING, IS NO LONGER WITH CDA. F.A.O. OSENI, A FORMER ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR HIGHWAY PLANNING IN MINISTRY OF WORKS, HAS JUST JOINED CDA AS ENGINEERING CHIEF. HE CONDUCTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH BECHTEL, DRAVO, SHARP BROS. AND SEVERAL FOREIGN FIRMS FOR POSSIBLE JOINT VENTURE CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES WITH NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT. AT THIS POINT, CDA PROFESSIONAL STAFF STILL NUMBERS ONLY HALF-DOZEN.

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V5. MASTER PLAN: INTERNATIONAL PLANNING ASSOCIATES (IPA), AMERICAN CONSORTIUM DOING MASTER PLAN, HOPES TO COMPLETE DRAFT PLAN ON SCHEDULE BY JULY BUT HAMPERED BY LACK OF DATA, PARTICULARLY DEMOGRAPHIC, ON WHICH U.S. CENSUS BUREAU HAS BEEN HELPING. U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DISCUSSING NEXT PHASE OF BASIC STUDIES WITH CDA. WATER IS RECOGNIZED AS A MAJOR DEFICIENCY IN TERRITORY BUT IT IS ASSUMED ENOUGH CAN BE PIPED IN FROM SHIRCORO DAM BEING BUILT KADUNA RIVER 75 MILES NORTHWEST OF CITY SITE OR FROM THE NIGER RIVER. THIS IS A POTENTIAL MAJOR PROJECT.

6. CITY SITE: IPA FOUND THREE POSSIBLE SITES WITHIN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY FOR THE ACTUAL CAPITAL CITY. ITS RECOMMENDATION THAT THE GWAGWA PLAINS IN THE NORTHEAST QUADRANT BE THE SITE HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT. SITE NO. 2 WAS IN THE NORTHWEST QADRANT AND SITE NO. 3 IN THE SOUTH CENTER. IPA INITIALLY ENVISIONS A HALF-MOON SHAPE OPENING

SOUTHWEST FOR THE CITY, WHICH WOULD EXPAND FROM THE CENTER OF THE ARC TO REACH A TOTAL LENGTH OF ABOUT 35 MILES WHEN THE CITY REACHES THREE MILLION POPULATION. THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WOULD LIE ABOUT 15 MILES SOUTHWEST OF THE CITY ON A
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LIMITED ACCESS EXPRESSWAY. THE CHOSEN SITE HAS ENOUGH SPACE FOR THREE MILLION PEOPLE, THE BEST CLIMATE (1200 FEET OR HIGHER ELEVATION) AND THE BEST SOILS AND VEGETATION. THE GOVERNMENT RECENTLY OPENED A CAMPAIGN TO SOLICIT NAMES FOR THE CITY FROM THE PUBLIC.

7. BASE CAMP: A BELGIAN FIRM REPORTEDLY WON THE CONTRACT TO CONSTRUCT A BASE CAMP AT ABUJA BY APRIL ON A CRASH BASIS AFTER THE CDA ABANDONED ORIGINAL PLANS TO MAKE THE BASE CAMP THE FIRST CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW CITY ITSELF. THE CDA HOPES TO MOVE TO THE BASE CAMP BY SEPTEMBER. IT WILL BE SERVED BY AN AIRSTRIP BEING CONSTRUCTED.

8. COMMENT: FROM A COMMERCIAL VIEWPOINT THE NEW CAPITAL PROJECT IS LESS ATTRACTIVE THAN IT ORIGINALLY WAS BECAUSE THE TIMETABLE HAS IN EFFECT BEEN SLOWED BY HALF, TO A POPULATION OF 150,000 BY 1986 INSTEAD OF 300,000. IN COMPARISON, THE FEDERAL HOUSING AUTHORITY IS NOW INITIATING A PROJECT TO BUILD A NEW TOWN OUTSIDE LAGOS TO BE CALLED ABESAN WHICH WOULD HAVE 300,00 INHABITANTS, HOPEFULLY IN FIVE YEARS. NEVERTHELESS, THE NEW CAPITAL NEEDS A COMPLETE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES AND REMAINS OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF PRESTIGE ALONE. INTERESTED FIRMS SHOULD REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH THE CDA AND WILL FIND IT MORE CONVENIENT TO CONTACT IT BEFORE IT MOVES IN SEPTEMBER.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: ONLY THE SUMMARY IS FOR PUBLICATION AS WRITTEN BUT THE CABLE SHOULD BE DISSEMINATED TO FIRMS AND AGENCIES INTERESTED IN THE PROJECT. INCLUDE CHARLES CONRAD, NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION, AND CARL HOUSE. WYMAN

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